CHAPTER II.

PROVIDENCE J OR, THE PRINCIPLE OF SPECIAL ADAPTATION.

SECT. I.—COMPLICATION OF NATURE RESULTING IN FORTUITIES.

Two great principles run through,,every part of the works of God. The one is the PRINCIPLE OF ORDER,, or a general plan, to which every given object is conformed with amazing skill. The other is the PRINCIPLE OF SPECIAL ADAPTATION., by which each object, while formed after an ideal pattern, is at the same time, ,ind by an equally wonderful skill, accommodated to the situation which it occupies, and the purpose which it has to serve. In the organic kingdoms we discover a type for every particular species of plant and animal, for every leaf and every limb. Mr. Owen has demonstrated that there is a large series of homologous bones running through the whole vertebrate class of animals, from fishes up to man. But Cuvier and Sir 0. Boll had previously shown that these bones are shortened or lengthened, strengthened or lightened, bent or straightened, to suit the particular functions and habits of every living creature. We are convinced that these two principles may be detected in oilier departments of nature as well as the organic. The science which treats of the one might be called—were it not that the word has been so abused—Cosmology; the science which treats of the other has an admirable phrase allotted to it, in Teleology.

Had our subject required it, we might have shown that the,se principles pervade the whole of nature ;[*] but in thiH treatise we

* In an article in the North British Review, An<r. 1851, the author Bought to

show, (1,) that the principles of nnlcr and adaptation run through all nature; *(2,)* that the principle of order is suited to mun'n Intelligence; (#,) that therein an analogous typical system, with special adaptations, running through the revealed dispensations of God. But thin whole subject, with the co-exwtonco and correlation of its two principles, in so important in itself, and at the HamcPtimo so misunder-stood and perverted, that the author, in conjunction with I>r. Dickie, lias dincuHwid it in a separate treuliBt', entitled "Typical Forms and Spcrial Kwdn iu Creation."